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IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting a promotional offer over a computer network, the method comprising:

defining the structure of said promotional offer having a plurality of associated parameters, one or more of which are unspecified or variable;

targeting one or more of a plurality of customers as recipients of the promotional offer;
and

distributing a record of the promotional offer to the customers over said computer network;

wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable parameters associated with the offer are individually assigned for one or more of the targeted customers to whom the record of the offer is distributed,

wherein said unspecified or variable parameters are defined when the promotional offer is accepted by respective customers, and

wherein said record of the promotional offer comprises a declinable value once said unspecified or variable parameters are defined.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable

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offer parameters are assigned default values.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the assigned default values can be changed a predetermined number of times.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the unspecified or variable parameters vary with time.
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the unspecified or variable offer parameters comprises ~~at least one of~~ an offer discount information, an offer validity period, and an offer life period.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable offer parameters are assigned for customers on the basis of respective customer profile information.
8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein a plurality of the unspecified or variable offer parameters are assigned by different entities able to access different respective customer profile information.
9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein there is provided an incentive for the different

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entities to appropriately assign the unspecified or variable offer parameters.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable offer parameters are assigned within a predetermined range of values.
11. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable offer parameters are assigned in accordance with predetermined rules.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the predetermined rules vary for different respective customers.
13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the predetermined rules specify how to determine a respective customer's eligibility to redeem the offer.
14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the predetermined rules specify how to determine a respective customer's authorization to determine said one or more unspecified or variable parameters.
15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the customer profile information can include demographic or behavioral information.

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16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein respective customers can decline to redeem the offer.
17. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the record of the offer is an electronic coupon.
18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the record of the promotional offer is distributed online.
19. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the unspecified or variable parameter of offer discount information is determined for each customer such that the customer's utility for the promoted product of the product identifier information exceeds that of the customer's corresponding preferred brand product.
20. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the unspecified or variable parameter of offer discount information is determined for each customer as the difference in price between the promoted product of the product identifier information and the customer's corresponding preferred brand product.
21. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the unspecified or variable parameter of offer validity period is determined for each customer as at least the period to the estimated time of the customer's next purchase.

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22. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting a promotional offer over a computer network, the method comprising:

defining the structure of said promotional offer to be made to a plurality of customers having a plurality of associated parameters, one or more of which are unspecified or variable, wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable parameters associated are able to be individually assigned for one or more of the targeted customers to whom a record of the promotional offer is distributed over said computer network,

wherein said unspecified or variable parameters are defined when the promotional offer is redeemed by respective customers, and

wherein said record of the promotional offer comprises a declinable value once said unspecified or variable parameters are defined.

23. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting a promotional offer over a computer network, the method comprising:

distributing to one or more targeted customers a record of said promotional offer having a plurality of associated parameters; and

defining values of one or more of the associated parameters for respective targeted customers, when requested by the respective customers,

wherein said one or more of the parameters associated with the promotional offer are individually assigned to one or more of the targeted customers,

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wherein said one or more of the parameters are defined when requested by respective customers, and

wherein said record of the promotional offer comprises a declinable value once said unspecified or variable parameters are defined.

24. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting a promotional offer over a computer network, the method comprising:

targeting one or more of a plurality of customers as recipients of a said promotional offer having a plurality of associated parameters, one or more of which are unspecified or variable,

wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable parameters associated with the promotional offer are individually assigned for one or more of the targeted customers to whom a record of time offer is distributed over said computer network,

wherein said unspecified or variable parameters are defined when the promotional offer is redeemed by respective customers, and

wherein said promotional offer comprises a declinable value once said unspecified or variable parameters are defined.

25. (Previously Presented) A method of conducting a promotional offer over a computer network, the method comprising:

distributing to one or more targeted customers a record of a promotional offer having a plurality of associated parameters,

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wherein one or more of the associated parameters associated with the promotional offer have been individually assigned to one or more of the targeted customers,

wherein said parameters are defined when the promotional offer is redeemed by respective customers, and

wherein said record of the promotional offer comprises a declinable value once said unspecified or variable parameters are defined.

26. (Currently Amended) A computer program product having a computer readable medium having a computer program recorded therein conducting a promotional offer, said computer program comprising:

code adapted to ~~defining~~ define the structure of said promotional offer having a plurality of associated parameters, one or more of which are unspecified or variable,

wherein said code targets one or more of a plurality of customers as recipients of the promotional offer,

wherein said code adapted to distributing a record of the promotional offer to the customers over said computer network,

wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable parameters associated with the promotional offer are individually assigned for one or more of the targeted customers to whom the record of the promotional offer is distributed,

wherein said unspecified or variable parameters are defined when the promotional offer is accepted by respective customers, and

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wherein said record of the promotional offer comprises a declinable value once said unspecified or variable parameters are defined.

27. (Previously Presented) Apparatus for conducting a promotional offer, the apparatus comprising:

code adapted to define the structure of said promotional offer having a plurality of associated parameters, one or more of which are unspecified or variable,

wherein said code targets one or more of a plurality of customers as recipients of the promotional offer,

wherein said code adapted to distributing a record of the promotional offer to the customers over said computer network,

wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable parameters associated with the promotional offer are individually assigned for one or more of the targeted customers to whom the record of the promotional offer is distributed,

wherein said unspecified or variable parameters are defined when the promotional offer is accepted by respective customers, and

wherein said record of the promotional offer comprises a declinable value once said unspecified or variable parameters are defined.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the unspecified or variable parameters are defined when the offer is redeemed by respective customers or when requested by

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respective customers.

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable offer parameters are assigned default values.
30. (Original) The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the assigned default values can be changed a predetermined number of times.
31. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the unspecified or variable parameters vary the time.
32. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the unspecified or variable offer parameters ~~can include one or more of~~ offer discount information, after validity period, and offer life period.
33. (Original) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable offer parameters are assigned for customers on the basis of respective customer profile information.
34. (Original) The apparatus of claim 33, wherein a plurality of the unspecified or variable offer parameters are assigned by different entities able to access different respective customer

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profile information.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein an incentive is provided for the different entities to appropriately assign the unspecified or variable offer parameters.
36. (Original) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable offer parameters are assigned within a predetermined range of values.
37. (Original) The apparatus of claim 36, wherein one or more of the unspecified or variable offer parameters are assigned in accordance with predetermined rules.
38. (Original) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the predetermined rules vary for different respective customers.
39. (Original) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the predetermined rules specify how to determine a respective customer's eligibility to redeem the offer.
40. (Original) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the predetermined rules specify how to determine a respective customer's authorization to determine said one or more unspecified or variable parameters.

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41. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the customer profile information can include demographic or behavioral information.
42. (Original) The apparatus of claim 26, wherein respective customers can decline to redeem the offer.
43. (Original) The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the record of the offer is an electronic coupon.
44. (Original) The apparatus of claim 43, wherein the record of the promotional offer is distributed online.
45. (Original) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the unspecified or variable parameter of offer discount information is determined for each customer such that the customer's utility for the promoted product of the product identifier information exceeds that of the customer's corresponding preferred brand product.
46. (Original) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the unspecified or variable parameter of offer discount information is determined for each customer as the difference in price between the promoted product of the product identifier information and the customer's corresponding preferred brand product.

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47. (Original) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the unspecified or variable parameter of offer validity period is determined for each customer as at least the period to the estimated time of the customer's next purchase.

48. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said declinable value comprising any of a linear, polynomial, and exponential rate of decline in value.